

Message Text

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DEPT FOR SER/CFS, A/AID AND NEA/ARP

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID, PFOR, QA, US
SUBJECT: COUNTRY FINANCED SERVICES-URGENT GOQ REQUEST FOR FIRE
PREVENTION AND CIVIL DISASTER TEAM

1. GOQ, THROUGH COMMANDANT OF POLICE AND FIRE BRIGADE, SHAYKH HAMID BIN JASSIM AL-THANI, HAS URGENTLY REQUESTED USG ASSISTANCE IN SELECTING SMALL TEAM TO VISIT DOHA AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STEMMING RASH OF FIRES THAT HAS AFFLICTED QATAR DURING PAST TWO MONTHS. THE PROBLEM IS A MAJOR CONCERN OF THE COMMANDANT'S UNCLE, THE AMIR.

2. AS EXPLAINED BY COMMANDANT AND BRIGADIER YAHYA HUSSEIN, ASSISTANT COMMANDANT OF POLICE, THE US IS REGARDED IN QATAR AS BEING PREEMINENT IN FIELD OF FIRE PREVENTION, FIRE-FIGHTING AND PREPARATIONS FOR, AND HANDLING OF, CIVIL DISASTERS. THE COMMANDANT WAS HIGHLY DEPRECATORY OVER ASSISTANCE PROVIDED BY BRITISH FIRE EXPERTS SEVERAL YEARS AGO.

3. AS CONCEIVED BY QATARIS, TEAM (WHICH WOULD BE FINANCED ENTIRELY BY GOQ) WOULD CONSIST OF TWO OR THREE EXPERTS WHO WOULD ANALYZE PRESENT STATUS OF FIRE PREVENTION MEASURES AND FIRE-FIGHTING EQUIPMENT, PERSONNEL AND TECHNIQUES, AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS ON A WIDE-SCALE
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INCLUDING PORT FACILITIES, PETROLEUM INSTALLATIONS, CITIES, BUILDING CODES, FIRE STATIONS, FIRE-ALARM DEVICES AND SYSTEMS, ETC. THE TEAM WOULD ALSO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS IN AREA OF "CIVIL DEFENSE" WHICH WAS EXPLAINED AS MEANING "CIVIL DISASTERS" SUCH AS AN AIRPLANE CATASTROPHE, EARTH-QUAKE, LARGE FIRE OR EXPLOSION, EPIDEMIC, WHICH WOULD TAX EXISTING FACILITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS.

4. GOQ URGENTLY DESIRES TEAM TO BEGIN WORK SINCE FIRES ARE MAJOR CONCERN TO THE POPULACE AND GOQ LEADERSHIP. (TEAM WOULD STAY AS LONG AS NEEDED, PRESUMABLY AT LEAST THREE MONTHS.) IF AT ALL POSSIBLE, EMBASSY WOULD APPRECIATE TENTATIVE RESPONSE TO GOQ REQUEST NO LATER THAN MAY 7. USG PROMPT ASSISTANCE TO GOQ REQUEST WOULD BE WELL-RECEIVED BY GOQ LEADERSHIP AND WOULD GO FAR TOWARD ENHANCING GOQ-USG RELATIONS.

5. BACKGROUND AND COMMENTS: AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED BY EMBASSY, QATAR HAS HAD AN EXTRAORDINARY NUMBER OF FIRES DURING PAST TWO MONTHS. WHILE THE SPECTACULAR BLAZES HAVE BEEN AT THE NGL PLANT AND OLD QPC FACILITY AT UMM SAID, OTHE FIRES HAVE INCLUDED FOUR FIRES IN THE PORT AREA, TWO IN THE CUSTOMS AREA, TWO AT WAREHOUSES, ONE IN A HOSPITAL AND ONE AT A LEADING PRINTING PRESS. WHILE MUCH OF THIS CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO NORMAL INCIDENCE OF FIRES, THE POPULACE IS VERY AGITATED OVER THE PROBLEM AS IS THE GOQ WHICH IS ATTEMPTING TO TAKE IMMEDIATE ACTION TO CORRECT THE PROBLEM. THE SITUATION HAS LED TO NUMEROUS RUMORS OVER THE ORIGINS OF THE FIRE. THESE RUMORS INCLUDE ARSON, POOR FIRE SAFETY PRACTICES (WHICH GOQ ADMITS) AND BUSINESSMEN DESTROYING UNSALABLE GOODS TO COLLECT FROM INSURANCE COMPANIES. WHATEVER THE CAUSES, THE PROBLEM IS REAL AND HAS CREATED ENORMOUS CONCERN IN THE POPULACE. IT IS BEING FACED SQUARELY BY GOQ, WHICH URGENTLY NEEDS OUR ASSISTANCE. PAGANELLI

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Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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